

10/076,346
DOCKET NO. F05-138810M/MKO

6

REMARKS

Claims 2-4, 10, 29-31, 33-37, and 40-42 are all the claims presently pending in the application. Claims 2, 4, 29-31, 33-34, 36-37, and 40-41 are amended to more clearly define the invention and claims 1, 5-9, 11-28, 32, 38-39, and 43 are canceled. Claims 3-4 and 10 are independent.

These amendments are made only to more particularly point out the invention for the Examiner and not for narrowing the scope of the claims or for any reason related to a statutory requirement for patentability.

Applicants also note that, notwithstanding any claim amendments herein or later during prosecution, Applicants' intent is to encompass equivalents of all claim elements.

Entry of this §1.116 Amendment is proper. Since the Amendments above narrow the issues for appeal and since such features and their distinctions over the prior art of record were discussed earlier, such amendments do not raise a new issue requiring a further search and/or consideration by the Examiner. Indeed, the Amendments above place the application into condition for allowance. As such, entry of this Amendment is believed proper and Applicant earnestly solicits entry. No new matter has been added.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge that claims 3 and 10 are allowed and that claim 4 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

This Amendment cancels rejected independent claims 1, 7, and 43, rewrites claim 4 into independent form, and amends the claims which depended from the canceled independent claims.

10/076,346
DOCKET NO. F05-138810M/MKO

7

to depend from allowed independent claims 3 and 10.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims are allowable.

I. THE 35 U.S.C. § 112, SECOND PARAGRAPH REJECTION AND THE DOUBLE PATENTING REJECTION

The Examiner alleges that claim 30 is indefinite. While Applicant submits that such would be clear to one of ordinary skill in the art taking the present Application as a whole, to speed prosecution claim 30 has been amended in accordance with Examiner Gutman's very helpful suggestions.

The Examiner rejects claim 38 as being a substantial duplicate of claim 37. This Amendment cancels claim 38.

In view of the foregoing, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw these rejections.

II. FORMAL MATTERS AND CONCLUSION

The Office Action objects to the drawings. This Amendment cancels claims 32 and 39. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this objection.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2-4, 10, 29-31, 33-37, and 40-42, all the claims presently pending in the Application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

10/076,346
DOCKET NO. F05-138810M/MKO

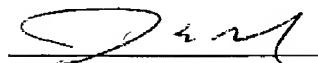
8

Should the Examiner find the Application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

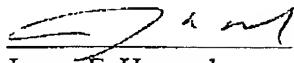
Date: 9/29/04


James E. Howard
Registration No. 39,715

McGinn & Gibb, PLLC
8321 Old Courthouse Rd., Suite 200
Vienna, Virginia 22182
(703) 761-4100
Customer No. 21254

CERTIFICATION OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that I am filing this Amendment by facsimile with the United States Patent and Trademark Office to Examiner Hilary L. Gutman, Group Art Unit 3612 at fax number (703) 872-9306 this 29th day of September, 2004.


James E. Howard
Reg. No. 39,715